

**REMARKS**

The Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in paragraph 7 of the Office Action is noted with appreciation.

It is further noted that the Examiner has not rescinded the indication of allowable subject matter of claim 37. See paragraph 9 in the September 15, 2003 Office Action.

Claims 5-7, 9-10, 12-14, 16-26, 29-39, 41-42, and 44-45 are pending in the application. Claim 5 has been amended to incorporate allowable claim 43, now cancelled. Allowable claims 21 and 38 have been rewritten in independent form including all limitations of base claim 5. Claim 37 has been rewritten in independent form including all limitations of base claim 29 and intervening claim 30. Allowable claims 22-24 have been amended to depend from claim 21. Independent claim 29 has been amended to incorporate claim 40, now cancelled. New claim 45 has been added to provide Applicants with the scope of protection to which they are believed entitled.

No new matter has been introduced through the foregoing amendments.

The 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of claims 5-7 and 22-24 as being obvious over *Roberts* is traversed for the reasons advanced in the previous Amendments. Solely for the purpose of expediting prosecution, Applicants have nevertheless amended claim 5 to incorporate allowable claim 43. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection relying on *Roberts* is now believed appropriate and therefore courteously solicited.

The 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection of claims 29-36, 40 and 44 as being obvious over *Rudy* is traversed for the reasons advanced in the previous Amendments. Solely for the purpose of expediting prosecution, Applicants have nevertheless amended claim 29 to incorporate claim 40, now canceled. Amended claim 29 recites, among other things, the following limitations:

- i) every straight line projected onto said sheet cuts through at least one of the shaped

protuberances; and

ii) there is a straight cutting line which does not cut through the bottom of any of said valleys.

*Rudy* fails to disclose, teach or suggest, at least, the latter. As can be seen in FIGs. 2, 3 and 5 of *Rudy*, every straight line that cuts through at least one of the “protuberances” (11, FIG. 3) necessarily cuts through the underlying “valley” (12, FIG. 3). Thus, in *Rudy*, there is no straight line that does not cut through the bottom of any of the “valleys” (12/12a, FIGs. 2, 3 and 5). Thus, the reference fails to render the invention of claim 29 obvious. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejection relying on *Rudy* is now believed appropriate and therefore courteously solicited.

New claim 45 is patentable over *Rudy* as well as the other applied references not only for the reason advanced with respect to amended claim 29 from which claim 45 depends, but also on its own merit since the applied references, especially *Rudy*, clearly fail to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed T-shaped protuberance.

Claims 5-7, 9-10, 12-14, 16-26, 38-39, 41 and 42 should be allowed as indicated in paragraph 7 of the Office Action.

Claim 37 should also be allowed in the absence of art rejections.

Each of the Examiner’s rejections has been traversed/overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are now in condition for allowance. Early and favorable indication of allowance is courteously solicited.


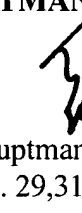


The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant’s attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby

hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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